

SAFE WITH MOTHER

'Jam dbyangs skyabs འཇམ་དབྱངས་སྐལ་པ་

A ten-year-old girl clad in a clean sheepskin robe squatted by a tree. Nearby, soldiers were forcing men, women, and her mother down a footpath. Wounded locals moved painfully down the footpath as soldiers pushed them on. They were heading toward the foot of a forested mountain. The girl sat motionlessly, too tired to go any further. She had five bullet holes in her clean sheepskin robe, and her right lip had been shot. She sniffed and smelled gunpowder.

She wondered if her father would find her. It was just a dream. The soldiers had taken her father, but she did not know that. She patiently waited for him.

Suddenly, two soldiers carrying guns over their shoulders appeared and approached her. They put their guns on the ground near her.

She thought, "They are going to kill me."

One soldier took out a grey rope from his pack and uncoiled it. The soldiers used the rope to tie their gun muzzles and butts together to make a stretcher. They put the little girl on it and carried her. The little girl was surprised to find it was comfortable. She could not believe there were such soldiers in the world. She watched the back of the soldier in front of her and said nothing.

A while later, the little girl felt thirsty and a lot of pain. She asked the soldiers to stop so she could drink some water. They could not understand her because their languages were different. The little girl gestured, and eventually, the soldiers understood. They gave her a canteen of water. She drank some and felt better, though it smelled bad. She felt like her right leg no longer belonged to her.

She did not see her father.

When they reached the foot of the forested mountain, she saw

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her mother with a group of peasants. She felt even more uncomfortable. She did not cry because she knew it would not help. She was afraid of the soldiers. Still, she hoped her mother would help her.

Her mother was not allowed to approach her daughter without permission from the soldiers who, with gestures and sounds, ordered her to carry her child.

The little girl was with her mother again. She felt safer, despite her injuries.

TIBETAN TERM

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